

1508/1966.

COMUS:

A

MASQUE.

Of Forests, and Inchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the Ear.

IL PENSEROSO.

— *Quid vocis modulamen inane juvabit
Verborum sensusque vacans numerique loquacis?*

MILTON. ad Patrem.

[Price One Shilling.]

C O M M U S :

A

U E.



M A

Of which, and in which, the
Where there is more than one, the
In the same way.

— This is the most common in the
The same is the case in the
Milton, and in the same way.

[The One Shilling]

C O M U S:

A

M A S Q U E.

(Now adapted to the STAGE)

As Alter'd from

MILTON's MASQUE

A T

LUDLOW-CASTLE,

Which was never

Represented but on *Michaelmas-Day*, 1634 ;

Before the Right Honourable

The Earl of *BRIDGEWATER*, Lord
President of *WALES*.

The principal Performers were

The Lord *BRACKLY*, } } The Lady *ALICE*
Mr. *THO. EGERTON*, } } *EGERTON*.

The Music was compos'd by Mr. *Henry Lawes*,

Who also represented the *Attendant Spirit*.

The FIFTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. DODSLEY, at *Tully's-Head*, *Pall-Mall*.
M DCC XL.

COMUS

MASSQUE



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THE FIFTH EDITION

LONDON

Printed by R. BODLEY, at the 'Black Swan' in Fleet-Street



PROLOGUE.

OUR *steadfast bard, to his own genius true,*
*Still bade his muse, * fit audience find, tho' few.*
Scorning the judgment of a trifling age,
To choicer spirits he bequeath'd his page.
He too was scorn'd, and to Britannia's shame,
She scarce for half an age knew MILTON's name.
But now, his fame by ev'ry trumpet blown,
We on his deathless trophies raise our own.
Nor art nor nature did his genius bound,
Heav'n, hell, earth, chaos, he survey'd around.
All things his eye, thro' wit's bright empire thrown,
Beheld, and made what it beheld his own.

Such MILTON was: 'Tis ours to bring him forth,
And yours to vindicate neglected worth.
Such heav'n-taught numbers should be more than read,
More wide the manna thro' the nation spread.
Like some blest spirit he to-night descends,
Mankind he visits, and their steps befriends ;
Thro' mazy error's dark perplexing wood,
Points out the path of truth and real good ;
Warns erring youth, and guards the spotless maid
From spell of magic vice, by reason's aid.

* *Paradise Lost, B. VII. Ver. 31.*

P R O L O G U E.

*Attend the strains ; and should some meaner phrase
Hang on the style, and clog the nobler lays,
Excuse what we with trembling hand supply,
To give his beauties to the publick eye ;
His the pure essence, ours the grosser mean,
Thro' which his spirit is in action seen.
Observe the force, observe the flame divine,
That glows, breathes, acts, in each harmonious line.
Great objects only strike the gen'rous heart ;
Praise the sublime, o'erlook the mortal part ;
Be there your judgment, here your candor shown ;
Small is our portion,——and we wish 'twere none.*



E P I L O G U E,

To be spoken

By Mrs. Clive, in the Dress of *Euphrosyne*,
with the Wand and Cup.

SO M E critick, or I'm much deceiv'd, will ask,
“ What means this wild, this allegorick masque ?
“ Beyond all bounds of truth this author shoots ;
“ Can wands or cups transform men into brutes ?
“ 'Tis idle stuff ! —— And yet I'll prove it true ;
Attend ; for sure I mean it not of you.
The mealy Fop, that tastes my cup, may try,
How quick the change from beau to butterfly ;

But

EPILOGUE.

*But o'er the Insect should the Brute prevail,
He grins a monkey with a length of tail.
One stroke of * this, as sure as Cupid's arrow,
Turns the warm youth into a wanton sparrow.
Nay, the cold prude becomes a slave to love,
Feels a new warmth, and cooes a billing dove.
The sly coquet, whose artful tears beguile
Unwary hearts, weeps a false crocodile.
Dull poring pedants, shock'd at truth's keen light,
Turn moles, and plunge again in friendly night;
Misers grow vultures of rapacious mind,
Or more than vultures, they devour their kind;
Flatt'ers cameleons, creeping on the ground,
With every changing colour changing round.
The party-fool, beneath his heavy load,
Drudges a driven ass thro' dirty road.
While guzzling jots, their spouses say, are hogs,
And snarling criticks, authors swear, are dogs.*

*But to be grave, I hope we've prov'd at least,
All vice is folly, and makes man a beast.*

* The Wand.



Dramatis



Dramatis Personæ.

COMUS,	Mr. QUIN.
The LADY,	Mrs. CIBBER.
The BROTHERS,	{ Mr. MILWARD.
	{ Mr. CIBBER.
First SPIRIT,	Mr. MILLS.
Second SPIRIT,	Mr. HILL.
EUPHROSYNE,	Mrs. CLIVE.
SABRINA,	Mrs. ARNE.
Attendant SPIRITS,	{ Mr. BEARD,
BACCHANALS,	{ Mrs. CLIVE,
Pastoral Characters,	{ Mrs. ARNE, and
and other vocal Parts.	{ others.
Dancers, &c.	

SCENE a Wood near Ludlow-Castle.



COMUS:

A

MASQUE.



The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The first Attendant SPIRIT enters.

BEFORE the starry threshold of *Jove's* court
 My mansion is, where those immortal Shapes
 Of bright ærial spirits live inspher'd
 In regions mild of calm and serene air,
 Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
 Which men call earth, and with low-thoughted care
 Confin'd and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
 Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
 Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,
 After this mortal change, to her true servants
 Amongst th' enthroned gods on sainted seats.
 Yet some there are, that by due steps aspire

B

To

To lay their just hands on that golden key,
 That ope's the palace of eternity :
 To such my errand is ; and but for such,
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
 With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
 But whence yon slanting stream of purer light,
 Which streaks the midnight gloom, and hither darts
 Its beamy point ? Some messenger from *Jove*,
 Commission'd to direct or share my charge,
 And if I ken him right, a spirit pure
 As treads the spangled pavement of the sky,
 The gentle *Philadel* : But swift as thought
 He comes.—

The second attendant SPIRIT descends.

Declare, on what strange errand bent,
 Thou visitest this clime, to me assign'd,
 So far remote from thy appointed sphere ?

Second SPIRIT.

On no appointed task thou seest me now :
 But as returning from *Elysian* bowers
 (Whither from mortal coil a soul I wafted)
 Along this boundless sea of waving air
 I steer'd my flight, betwixt the gloomy shade
 Of these thick boughs thy radiant form I spy'd
 Gliding, as streams the moon thro' dusky clouds ;
 Instant I stoop'd my wing, and downward sped
 To learn thy errand, and with thine to join
 My kindred aid, from mortals ne'er withheld,
 When virtue on the brink of peril stands.

First SPIRIT.

Then mark th'occasion that demands it here.
Neptune, I need not tell, besides the sway
 Of ev'ry salt flood and each ebbing stream,
 Took in by lot 'twixt high and nether *Jove*
 Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,

That,



That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
 The unadorned bosom of the deep,
 Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
 By course commits to several governments,
 And gives them leave to wear their saphire crowns,
 And wield their little tridents; but this isle,
 The greatest and the best of all the main,
 He quarters to his blue-hair'd deities;
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
 A noble peer of mickle trust and power
 Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
 An old and haughty nation, proud in arms.

Second SPIRIT.

Does any danger threat his legal sway
 From bold sedition, or close-ambush'd treason?

First SPIRIT.

No danger thence. But to his lofty seat,
 Which borders on the verge of this wild vale,
 His blooming offspring, nurs'd in princely lore,
 Are coming to attend their father's state,
 And new-entrusted sceptre, and their way
 Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger;
 And here their tender age might suffer peril,
 But that by quick command from sov'reign Jove
 I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard.

Second SPIRIT.

What peril can their innocence assail
 Within these lonely and unpeopled shades?

First SPIRIT.

Attend my words. No place but harbours danger:
 In ev'ry region virtue finds a foe.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
 Crush'd the sweet poison of mis-used wine,
 After the *Tuscan* mariners transform'd,
 Coasting the *Tyrrhene* shore, as the winds list'd,

On *Circe's* island fell; (who knows not *Circe*,
 The daughter of the sun; whose charmed cup
 Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
 And downward fell into a groveling swine?)
 This nymph, that gaz'd upon his clust'ring locks,
 With ivy-berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
 Had by him, e're he parted thence, a son
 Much like his father, but his mother more,
 Whom therefore she brought up, and *Comus* nam'd.

Second SPIRIT.

Ill-omen'd birth to virtue and her sons!

First SPIRIT.

He ripe and frolick of his full-grown age,
 Roving the *Celtick* and *Iberian* fields,
 At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
 And in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
 Excels his mother at her mighty art,
 Off'ring to every weary traveller
 His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
 To quench the drought of *Phæbus*, which as they taste,
 (For most do taste through fond intemp'rate thirst)
 Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
 Th' express resemblance of the *Gods*, is chang'd
 Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
 Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
 All other parts remaining as they were.
 Yet, when he walks his tempting rounds, the forcerer
 By magick power their human face restores,
 And outward beauty, to delude the sight.

Second SPIRIT.

Loose they the memory of their former state?

First SPIRIT.

No, they (so perfect is their misery)
 Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
 But boast themselves more comely than before,
 And all their friends and native home forget,
 To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.

Second

Second SPIRIT.

Degrading fall! from such a dire distress,
What pain too great our mortal charge to save!

First SPIRIT.

For this, when any favour'd of high *Jove*
Chances to pass through this advent'rous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do: and opportune thou com'st
To share an office, which thy nature loves.
This be our task: but first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of *Iris'* woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who with his soft pipe and smooth-ditty'd song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. Veil'd in such disguise,
Be it my care the sever'd youths to guide
To their distress'd and lonely sister; thine
To cheer her foot-steps through the magic wood.
Whatever blessed spirit hovers near,
On errands bent to wand'ring mortals good,
If need require, him summon to thy side.
Unseen of mortal eye, such thoughts inspire,
Such heaven-born confidence, as need demands
In hour of trial.

Second SPIRIT.

Swift as winged winds
To my glad charge I fly.

[Exit.]

Manet First SPIRIT.

————— I'll wait a while
To watch the forcerer; for I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS

COMUS enters with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other, with him a rout of riotous men and women, dress'd as BACCHANALS; they come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.

COMUS speaks.

The star, that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of heav'n doth hold,
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep *Atlantick* stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the East;
Mean while welcome joy and feast.

SONG. By a man.

1.

Now Phœbus sinketh in the west,
Welcome song, and welcome jest,
Midnight shout, and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity:
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.

2.

Rigour now is gone to bed,
And advice with scrup'lous head,
Strict age, and sower severity
With their grave saws in slumber lie.

COMUS

COMUS speaks.

We that are of purer fire
 Imitate the starry choir,
 Who in their nightly watchful spheres
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas, and all their finny drove,
 Now to the moon in wav'ring morrice move,
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.

SONG. *By a woman.*

1.

*By dimpled brook, and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs, deck'd with daisies trim,
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
 What has night to do with sleep?*

2.

*Night has better sweets to prove;
 Venus now wakes, and wakens Love:
 Come, let us our rites begin;
 'Tis only day-light that makes sin.*

COMUS speaks.

Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark-veil'd *Cotytto*, t'whom the secret flame
 Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
 That ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon-womb
 Of *Stygian* darkness spits her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the air,
 Stay thy cloudy ebon-chair,

Wherein

Wherein thou rid'st with *Hecate*, and befriend
 Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out ;
 E're the blabbing Eastern scout,
 The nice morn, on th'*Indian* steep
 From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
 And to the tell-tale sun descry
 Our conceal'd solemnity.

SONG. *By a man and woman.*

I.

*From tyrant laws and customs free,
 We follow sweet variety;
 By turns we drink, and dance, and sing,
 Love for ever on the wing.*

2.

*Why should niggard rules controul
 Transports of the jovial soul?
 No dull stinting hour we own :
 Pleasure counts our time alone.*

SONG. *By a man.*

I.

*By the gayly circling glass
 We can see how minutes pass;
 By the hollow cask are told
 How the waning night grows old.*

2. *Soon*

2.

*Soon, too soon, the busy day
 Drives us from our sport and play.
 What have we with day to do?
 Sons of care! 'twas made for you.*

COMUS speaks.

Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
 In a light fantastick round.

As they are going to form a dance, COMUS speaks.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
 Our number may affright: Some virgin sure
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)
 Benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
 And to my wily trains. I shall e're long
 Be well-stock'd with as fair a herd, as graz'd
 About my mother *Circe*. Thus I hurl
 My dazling spells into the spongy air,
 Of pow'r to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
 And give it false presentments, lest the place
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
 Which must not be; for that's against my course.
 I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
 And well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy,
 Baited with reasons not unplaussible,
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of this magick dust,
 I shall appear some harmless villager,
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes; I fairly step aside
 And hearken, if I may her business hear.

C

The

The LADY enters.

LADY.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now; methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
Such as the jocund flute, or game some pipe
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous *Pan*,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness, and swell'd insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, O! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?

[*COMUS aside.*]

I'll ease her of that care and be her guide.

LADY.

My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepp'd, as they said, to the next thicket side,
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit,
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded even,
Like a sad votarist in *Palmer's* weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of *Phæbus'* wain.
But where they are, and why they come not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts; 'tis likeliest
They had engag'd their wand'ring steps too far.
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my list'ning ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names

On

On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
 These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
 By a strong-siding champion, conscience.
 O welcome, pure-ey'd faith, white-handed hope,
 Thou hovering angel, girt with golden wings,
 And thou unblemish'd form of chastity;
 I see you visibly, and now believe
 That he, the supreme good, t'whom all things ill
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance;
 Would send a glitt'ring guardian, if need were,
 To keep my life and honour unassail'd.
 Was I deceiv'd, or did a fable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
 I did not err, there does a fable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
 I cannot hallow to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
 I'll venture; for my new-enliven'd spirits
 Prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

S O N G.

*Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
 Within thy airy cell,
 By slow Meander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroider'd vale,
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;*

*Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That likest thy Narcissus are?*

O! if thou have

Hid them in some flow'ry cave,

Tell me but where,

Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere;

So may'st thou be translated to the skies,

And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies.

COMUS *Aside.*

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence;
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
 At every fall smoothing the raven-down
 Of darkness, till it smil'd! I have oft heard
 My mother *Circe* with the *Sirens* three
 Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled *Naiades*,
 Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
 Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
 And lap it in *Elysium*; *Scylla* wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell *Charybdis* murmur'd soft applause:
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
 And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself.
 But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss
 I never heard till now.—I'll speak to her,
 And she shall be my queen. Hail, foreign wonder,
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed;
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with *Pan*, or *Silvan*, by blest song
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

LADY.

Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise,
 That is address'd to unattending ears:
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my sever'd company,
 Compell'd me to awake the courteous *Echo*,
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COMUS.

COMUS.

What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?

LADY.

Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

COMUS.

Could that divide you from near-usher'd guides?

LADY.

They left me weary on a grassy turf.

COMUS.

By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

LADY.

To seek i'th'valley some cool friendly spring.

COMUS.

And left your fair side all unguarded, lady?

LADY.

They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

COMUS.

Perhaps forestalling night prevented them?

LADY.

How easy my misfortune is to hit!

COMUS.

Imports their loss, beside the present need?

LADY.

No less than if I should my brothers lose.

COMUS.

Were they of manly prime or youthful bloom?

LADY.

As smooth as *Hebe's* their unrazor'd lips.

COMUS.

Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox

In his loose traces from the furrow came,

And the tir'd hedger at his supper sat;

I saw them under a green mantling vine,

That crawls along the side of yon small hill,

Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;

Their port was more than human, as they stood:

I took it for a fairy vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colours of the rainbow live,
 And play i'th'plaited clouds. I was awe-struck,
 And, as I pass'd, I worshipp'd; if those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to heav'n,
 To help you find them.

LADY.

Gentle villager,

What readiest way would bring me to that place?

COMUS.

Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

LADY.

To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,
 Would over-task the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet.

COMUS.

I know each lane, and every alley green,
 Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
 And if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd,
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
 'Ere morrow wake, or the low-roofed lark
 From her thatch'd pallat rowse: if otherwise,
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
 Till farther quest.

LADY.

Shepherd, I take thy word,

And trust thy honest-offer'd courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoaky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
 And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
 And yet is most pretended. In a place
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,

I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest providence, and square my trial
 To my proportion'd strength—Shepherd, lead on.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter COMUS's crew from behind the trees.

SONG. *By a man.*

I.

*Fly swiftly, ye minutes, till COMUS receive
 The nameless soft transports, that beauty can give ;
 The bowl's frolick joys let him teach her to prove
 And she in return yield the raptures of love.*

2.

*Without love and wine, wit and beauty are vain,
 All grandeur inspid, and riches a pain,
 The most splendid palace grows dark as the grave ;
 Love and wine give, ye gods ! or take back what you
 gave.*

CHORUS.

*Away, away, away,
 To COMUS' court repair ;
 There night out-shines the day,
 There yields the melting fair.*

End of the First Act.

ACT



A C T II.

Enter the two BROTHERS.

Eldest BROTHER.

U N MUFFLE, ye faint stars ; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benizon,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit *Chaos*, that reigns here
In double night of darkness, and of shades :
Or if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Tho' a rush-candle, from the wicker-hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light ;
And thou shalt be our star of *Arcady*,
Or *Tyrian* cynosure.

Youngest BROTHER.

Or if our eyes
Be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cots,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops ;
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feather'd dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little chearing
In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.
But oh ! that hapless virgin, our lost sister !
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles ?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,

Or

Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

Eldest BROTHER.

Peace, brother; be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion?
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk: and wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude;
Where, with her best nurse, contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.
He that hath light within his own clear breast,
May sit i'th center, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Youngest BROTHER.

'Tis most true,
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the chearful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house:
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,

D

His

His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
 Or do his grey-hairs any violence?
 But beauty, like the fair *Hesperian* tree
 Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
 Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye,
 To save her blossoms and defend her fruit
 From the rash hand of bold incontinence.
 You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
 Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
 Danger will wink on opportunity,
 And let a single helpless maiden pass
 Uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
 Of night or loneliness it reck's me not;
 I fear the dread events that dog them both,
 Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
 Of our unowned sister.

Eldest BROTHER.

I do not, brother,
 Infer, as if I thought my sister's state
 Secure without all doubt or controversy:
 Yet where an equal poise of hope and fear,
 Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
 That I incline to hope rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.
 My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
 Which you remember not.

Youngest BROTHER.

What hidden strength,
 Unless the strength of heav'n, if you mean that?

Eldest BROTHER.

I mean that too; but yet a hidden strength,
 Which, if heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own:
 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity.
 She that has that, is clad in compleat steel,

And

And, like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen,
 May trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,
 Infamous hills, and sandy perillous wilds;
 Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
 No savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity:
 Yea there, where very desolation dwells
By grotts, and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
 Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

*See Pope's
 Elvira*

Youngest BROTHER.

How gladly would I have my terrors hush'd,
 By crediting the wonders you relate!

Eldest BROTHER.

Some say, no evil thing that walks by night,
 In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
 Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
 That breaks his magick chains at *curfew* time,
 No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine,
 Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
 Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
 Antiquity from the old schools of *Greece*,
 To testify the arms of chastity?
 Hence had the huntress *Dian* her dread bow,
 Fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
 Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lionsess,
 And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
 The frivolous bolt of *Cupid*; gods and men
 Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o'th' woods.
 What was the snaky-headed *Gorgon* shield,
 That wife *Minerva* wore, unconquer'd virgin,
 Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
 But rigid looks of chaste austeriety,
 And noble grace, that dash'd brute violence
 With sudden adoration, and blank awe?

Youngest BROTHER.

But what are virtue's awful charms to those,
Who cannot reverence what they never knew?

Eldest BROTHER.

So dear to heav'n is faintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand livery'd angels lacquey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things, that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turn it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal.

Youngest BROTHER.

Happy state,
Beyond belief of vice!

Eldest BROTHER.

But when vile lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the spiritual part,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
Oft seen in charnel-vaults, and sepulchres;
Lingring and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body, that it lov'd,
And link'd itself in carnal sensuality
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Youngest BROTHER.

How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is *Apollo's* lute,

And

And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Eldest BROTHER.

Lift, lift; I hear
Some far-off hallow break the silent air.

Youngest BROTHER.

Methought so too; what should it be?

Eldest BROTHER.

For certain
Either some one like us night-founder'd here,
Or else some neighbour wood-man, or at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Youngest BROTHER.

Heaven keep my sister. Again! Again! and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our Guard.

Eldest BROTHER.

I'll hallow;
If he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
Defence is a good cause, and heav'n be for us.

Enter the first Attendant Spirit, habited like a Shepherd.

Youngest BROTHER.

That hallow I should know; what are you? speak.
Come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

First SPIRIT.

What voice is that? My young lord? Speak again.

Youngest BROTHER.

O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd sure.

Eldest BROTHER.

Thyrsis? whose artful strains have oft delay'd
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweeten'd every musk-rose of the dale?
How cam'st thou here, good swain? Has any ram
Slipp'd from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,

Or

Or straggling weather the pent flock forlook?
How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

First SPIRIT.

O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth,
That doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But O my virgin lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?

Eldest BROTHER.

To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame,
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

First SPIRIT.

Ah me unhappy! then my fears are true.

Eldest BROTHER.

What fears, good *Thyrsis*? prithee briefly shew.

First SPIRIT.

I'll tell ye; 'tis not vain, nor fabulous,
(Tho' so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by th'heavenly muse,
Story'd of old in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks, whose entrance leads to hell;
For such there be; but unbelief is blind.

Eldest BROTHER.

Proceed, good shepherd; I am all attention.

First SPIRIT.

Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immur'd in cypress shades a forcerer dwells,
Of *Bacchus* and of *Circe* born, great *Comus*,
Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
And here to ev'ry thirsty wanderer
By sly enticements gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mix'd, whose pleasing poison

The

The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage,
 Character'd in the face. This have I learnt
 Tending my flocks hard by i'th'hilly crofts,
 That brow this bottom glade, whence night by night
 He and his monst'rous rout are heard to howl,
 Like stabled wolves or tygers at their prey,
 Doing abhorred rites to *Hecate*,
 In their obscured haunts and inmost bowers.
 Yet have they many baits and guileful spells,
 And beauty's tempting semblance can put on,
 To inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
 Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
 But hark! the beaten timbrel's jarring sound
 And wild tumultuous mirth proclaim their presence:
 Onward they move; and see! a blazing torch
 Gleams thro' the shade, and this way guides their steps.
 Let us withdraw a while, and watch their motions.

[*They retire.*]

Enter COMUS's crew revelling, and by turns caressing each other, till they observe the two brothers; then the elder brother advances and speaks.

Eldest BROTHER.

Who are you? speak! that thus in wanton riot
 And midnight revelry, like drunken *Bacchanals*,
 Invade the silence of these lonely shades?

First WOMAN.

Ye godlike youths, whose radiant forms excell
 The blooming grace of *Maia's* winged son,
 Bless the propitious star, that led you to us;
 We are the happiest of the race of men;
 Of freedom, mirth, and joy the only heirs:

But

But you shall share them with us; for this cup,
This nectar'd cup, the sweet assurance gives
Of present, and the pledge of future bliss.

She offers 'em the cup, which they both put by.

Eldest BROTHER.

Forbear, nor offer us the poison'd sweets,
That thus have render'd thee thy sex's shame,
All sense of honour banish'd from thy breast.

SONG.

I.

Fame's an Echo, prattling double,
An empty, airy, glittering bubble,
A breath can swell, a breath can sink it,
The wise not worth their keeping think it.

2.

Why then, why such toil and pain
Fame's uncertain smiles to gain?
Like her sister Fortune, blind,
To the best she's oft unkind,
And the worst her favour find.

Eldest BROTHER.

By her own sentence virtue stands absolv'd,
Nor asks an Echo from the tongues of men
To tell what hourly to herself she proves.
Who wants his own, no other praise enjoys;
His ear receives it as a fulsome tale,
To which his heart in secret gives the lye.
Nay, slander'd innocence must feel a peace,
An inward peace, which flatter'd guilt ne'er knew.

Youngest

Youngest BROTHER.

How low sinks beauty, when by vice debas'd!
How fair that form, if virtue dwelt within!
But, from this shameless advocate of shame,
To me the warbled song harsh discord grates.

First WOMAN:

Oh! how unseemly shews in blooming youth
Such grey severity!——But come with us,
We to the bower of bliss will guide your steps;
There you shall taste the joys that nature sheds
On the gay spring of life, youth's flow'ry prime;
From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve,
Each rising hour by rising pleasures mark'd.

SONG. *By a woman in a pastoral habit:*

Would you taste the noontide air?

To yon fragrant bower repair,

Where, woven with the poplar bough,

The mantling vine will shelter you.

2.

Down each side a fountain flows;

Tinkling, murmuring, as it goes

Lightly o'er the mossy ground,

Sultry Phœbus scorching round.

3.

Round, the languid herds and sheep

Stretch'd o'er sunny hillocks sleep,

While on the hyacinth and rose

The fair does all alone repose.

E

4. All

*All alone—and in her arms
 Your breast may beat to love's alarms,
 Till blest'd, and blessing, you shall own
 The joys of Love are joys alone.*

Youngest BROTHER.

Short is the course of every lawless pleasure;
 Grief, like a shade, on all its footsteps waits,
 Scarce visible in joy's meridian height;
 But downward as its blaze declining speeds,
 The dwarfish shadow to a giant spreads.

First WOMAN.

No more, these formal maxims misbecome you,
 They only suit suspicious shrivell'd age.

SONG. By a man and two women.

*Live, and love, enjoy the fair,
 Banish sorrow, banish care;
 Mind not what old dotards say,
 Age has had his share of play,
 But youth's sport begins to day.*

*From the fruits of sweet delight
 Let not scare-crow virtue fright.
 Here in pleasure's vineyard we
 Rove, like birds, from tree to tree,
 Careless, airy, gay, and free.*

Eldest BROTHER.

How can your impious tongues profane the name
 Of sacred virtue, and yet promise pleasure
 In lying songs of vanity and vice?

From

From virtue fever'd, pleasure phrenzy grows,
The gay delirium of the feverish mind,
And always flies at reason's cool return.

First WOMAN.

Perhaps it may; perhaps the sweetest joys
Of love itself from passion's folly spring;
But say, does wisdom greater bliss bestow?

Eldest BROTHER.

Alike from love's and pleasure's path you stray,
In sensual folly blindly seeking both,
Your pleasure riot, lust your boasted love;
Capricious, wanton, bold, and brutal lust
Is meanly selfish, when resisted, cruel,
And, like the blast of pestilential winds,
Taint the sweet bloom of nature's fairest forms.
But love, like od'rous Zephyr's grateful breath,
Repays the flower that sweetness which it borrows;
Uninjuring, uninjur'd, lovers move
In their own sphere of happiness content,
By mutual truth avoiding mutual blame.
But we forget: Who hears the voice of truth,
In noisy riot and intemperance drown'd?

First WOMAN.

Come, come, my friends, and part'ners of my joys,
Leave to these pedant youths their bookish dreams;
Poor blinded boys, by their blind guides misled!
A beardless Cynick is the shame of nature,
Beyond the cure of this inspiring cup;
And my contempt, at best, my pity moves,
Away, nor waste a moment more about 'em.

CHORUS.

*Away, away, away,
To Comus' court repair,
There night outshines the day,
There yields the melting fair.*

[*Exeunt singing.*

Eldest BROTHER.

She's gone! may scorn pursue her wanton arts,
 And all the painted charms that vice can wear.
 Yet oft o'er credulous youth such *Syrens* triumph,
 And lead their captive sense in chains as strong
 As links of adamant. Let us be free,
 And, to secure our freedom, virtuous.

Youngest BROTHER.

But should our helpless sister meet the rage
 Of this insulting troop, what could she do?
 What hope, what comfort, what support were left?

SPIRIT.

She meets not them: but yet, if right I guess,
 A harder trial on her virtue waits.

Eldest BROTHER.

Protect her, heav'n! But whence this sad conjecture?

SPIRIT.

This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
 Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
 Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
 I sat me down to watch upon a bank
 With ivy canopy'd, and interwove
 With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
 Wrapp'd in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
 Till fancy had her fill; but e're a close
 The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
 And fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance,
 At which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a-while.

Youngest BROTHER.

What follow'd then? O! if our helpless sister——

SPIRIT.

Streight an unusual stop of sudden silence
 Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds,
 That draw the litter of close-curtain'd sleep.
 At last a soft and solemn breathing sound

Rose

Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
 And stole upon the air, that ev'n silence
 Was took e're she was 'ware, and wish'd she might
 Deny her nature, and be never more,
 Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
 And took in strains, that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of death—but O! e're long,
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honour'd lady, your dear sister.

Youngest BROTHER.

O my foreboding heart! Too true my fears.—

SPIRIT.

Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
 And O! poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
 Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
 Thro' paths, and turnings often trod by day,
 Till guided by my ear, I found the place,
 Where the damn'd wifard, hid in sly disguise
 (For so by certain signs I knew) had met
 Already, e're my best speed cou'd prevent,
 The aidless innocent lady, his wish'd prey;
 Who gently ask'd, if he had seen such two,
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.
 Longer I durst not stay; but soon I guess'd
 Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here.
 But farther know I not.

Youngest BROTHER.

———O night and shades!
 How are ye join'd with hell in triple knot
 Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin
 Alone, and helpless? Is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother?

Eldest BROTHER.

Yes; and keep it still,
 Lean on it safely; not a period

Shall

Shall be unpaid for me: Against the threats
 Of malice, or of forcery, or that power,
 Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,
 Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
 Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
 Yea ev'n that, which mischief meant most harm,
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness, when at last
 Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
 It shall be in eternal restless change
 Self-fed, and self-consum'd. If this fail,
 The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on;
 Against th'opposing will and arm of heav'n
 May never this just sword be lifted up;
 But for that damn'd magican, let him be girt
 With all the griesly legions that troop
 Under the sooty flag of *Acheron*,
Harpies and *Hydras*, or all the monstrous forms
 'Twixt *Africa* and *Inde*, I'll find him out,
 And force him to restore his purchase back,
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
 Curs'd as his life.

SPIRIT.

Alas! Good vent'rous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead,
 Far other arms, and other weapons must
 Be those, that quell the might of hellish charms.
 He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
 And crumble all thy sinews.

Eldest BROTHER.

Why prithee, shepherd,
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near,
 As to make this relation?

SPIRIT.

SPIRIT.

A shepherd lad,
 Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
 In ev'ry virtuous plant and healing herb,
 That spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray,
 Has shewn me simples of a thousand names,
 Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
 Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
 But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
 And bade me keep it as of sovereign use
 'Gainst all enchantment, mildew, blast, or damp,
 Or ghastly fury's apparition.
 I purs'd it up. If you have this about you
 (As I will give you when you go) you may
 Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardyhood
 And brandish'd blade rush on him, break his glass,
 And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
 But seize his wand, tho' he and his curs'd crew
 Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
 Or like the sons of *Vulcan* vomit smook,
 Yet will they soon retire if he but shrink.

Eldest BROTHER.

Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee,
 And some good angel bear a shield before us.

End of the Second Act.

ACT



ACT III.

SCENE opens and discovers a magnificent hall in COMUS's palace, set off with all the gay decorations proper for an ancient banqueting room. COMUS and attendants stand on each side of the lady, who is seated in an enchanted chair; and by her looks and gestures expresses great signs of uneasiness and melancholy.

COMUS speaks.

HENCE, loathed melancholy,
 Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born;
 In Stygian cave forelorn,
 'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
 Find out some uncouth cell,
 Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings;
 And the night-raven sings;
 There, under ebon-shades, and low-brow'd rocks;
 As ragged as thy locks,
 In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
 But come, thou goddess fair and free;
 In heaven ycleap'd *Euphrosyne*;
 And by men, heart-easing *Mirth*,
 Whom lovely *Venus* at a birth,
 With two sister graces more,
 To ivy-crowned *Bacchus* bore.
 Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
 Jest and youthful jollity,
 Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
 Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles,

Such

Such as hang on *Hebe's* cheek,
 And love to live in dimple sleek;
 Sport, that wrinkled care derides,
 And laughter holding both his sides.
 Come, and trip it, as you go,
 On the light fantastick toe:
 And in thy right-hand lead with thee
 The mountain-nymph, sweet liberty.

Whilst these lines are repeating, enter a nymph, representing EUPHROSYNE, or mirth; who advances to the lady, and sings the following song.

SONG.

1.

Come, come, bid adieu to fear,
 Love and harmony live here.
 No domestick jealous jars,
 Buzzing slanders, wordy wars,
 In my presence will appear;
 Love and harmony reign here.

2.

Sighs to amorous sighs returning,
 Pulses beating, bosoms burning,
 Bosoms with warm wishes panting,
 Words to speak those wishes waming,
 Are the only tumults here,
 All the woes you need to fear;
 Love and harmony reign here.

F

LADY.

LADY.

How long must I, by magick fetters chain'd
To this detested seat, hear odious strains
Of shameless folly, which my soul abhors?

COMUS.

Ye sedge-crown'd *Naiades*, by twilight seen
Along *Mæander's* mazy border green,
At COMUS' call appear in all your azure sheen.

He waves his wand, the Naiades enter, and range themselves in order to dance.

Now softly flow let *Lydian* measures move,
And breathe the pleasing pangs of gentle love.
In swimming dance on air's soft billows float,
Soft swell your bosoms with the swelling note;
With pliant arm in graceful motion vie,
Now sunk with ease, with ease now lifted high;
Till lively gesture each fond care reveal,
That musick can express, or passion feel.

The Naiads dance a slow dance agreeable to the subject of the preceding lines, and expressive of the passion of love.

After this dance the pastoral nymph advances slow, with a melancholy and desponding air, to the side of the stage, and repeats by way of soliloquy the first six lines, and then sings the ballad. In the mean time she is observ'd by EUPHROSYNE, who by her gesture expresses to the audience her different sentiments of the subject of her complaint, suitably to the character of their several songs.

R E C I.

RECITATIVO.

*How gentle was my Damon's air!
 Like sunny beams his golden hair,
 His voice was like the nightingale's,
 More sweet his breath than flow'ry vales.
 How hard such beauties to resign!
 And yet that cruel task is mine!*

A BALLAD.

I.

*On every hill, in every grove,
 Along the margin of each stream,
 Dear conscious scenes of former love,
 I mourn, and Damon is my theme.
 The hills, the groves, the streams remain,
 But Damon there I seek in vain.*

2.

*Now to the mossy cave I fly,
 Where to my swain I oft have sung,
 Well pleas'd the browsing goats to spy,
 As o'er the airy steep they hung.
 The mossy cave, the goats remain,
 But Damon there I seek in vain.*

3.

*Now thro' the rambling vale I pass,
And sigh to see the well-known shade;
I weep, and kiss the bended grass,
Where Love and Damon fondly play'd.
The vale, the shade, the grass remain,
But Damon there I seek in vain.*

4.

*From hill, from dale, each charm is fled,
Groves, flocks, and fountains please no more,
Each flower in pity droops its head,
All nature does my loss deplore.
All, all reproach the faithless swain,
Yet Damon still I seek in vain.*

RECITATIVO. By EUPHROSINE.

*Love, the greatest bliss below,
How to taste few women know;
Fewer still the way have hit
How a fickle swain to quit.
Simple nymph, then learn of me,
How to treat inconstancy.*

BALLAD.

1.

*The wanton god, that pierces hearts,
Dips in gall his pointed darts,
But the nymph disdains to pine,
Who bathes the wound with rosy wine.*

2. Farewel

2.

*Farewel lovers, when they're cloy'd ;
 If I am scorn'd, because enjoy'd,
 Sure the squeamish fops are free
 To rid me of dull company.*

3.

*They have charms, whilst mine can please,
 I love them much, but more my ease ;
 Nor jealous fears my love molest,
 Nor faithless vows shall break my rest.*

4.

*Why should they e'er give me pain,
 Who to give me joy disdain ?
 All I hope of mortal man,
 Is to love me——whilst he can.*

COMUS speaks.

*Cast thine eyes around, and see,
 How from every element
 Nature's sweets are cull'd for thee,
 And her choicest blessings sent.*

*Fire, water, earth, and air combine
 To compose the rich repast,
 Their aid the distant seasons join,
 To court thy smell, thy sight, thy taste.
 Hither summer, autumn, spring,
 Hither all your tributes bring ;
 All on bended knee be seen,
 Paying homage to your queen.*

After

After this they put on their chaplets, and prepare for the feast; while COMUS is advancing with his cup, and one of his attendants offers a chaplet to the lady, which she throws on the ground with indignation, the preparation for the feast is interrupted by lofty and solemn musick from above, whence the second attendant spirit descends gradually in a splendid machine, repeating the following lines.

Second SPIRIT speaks.

From the realms of peace above,
 From the source of heav'nly love,
 From the starry throne of Jove,
 Where tuneful muses in a glittering ring
 To the celestial lyre's eternal string,
 Patient virtue's triumph sing.
 To these dim labyrinths, where mortals stray,
 Maz'd in passion's pathless way,
 To save thy purer breast from spot and blame
 Thy guardian spirit came.

He advances to the lady, and sings, remaining still invisible to COMUS and his crew, but heard by them with some concern, which they endeavour to dissemble.

SONG.

I.

*Nor on beds of fading flowers,
 Shedding soon their gaudy pride,
 Nor with swains in Syren bowers,
 Will true pleasure long reside.*

*On awful virtue's hill sublime,
 Enthroned sits th'immortal fair;
 Who wins her height, must patient climb,
 The steps are peril, toil, and care.*

*So from the first did Jove ordain,
 Eternal bliss for transient pain.*

*The SPIRIT reascends, the musick playing loud
 and solemn.*

LADY.

Thanks, heav'nly songster! whosoe'er thou art,
 Who deign'st to enter these unhallow'd walls
 To bring the *song of virtue* to mine ear!
 O cease not, cease not the melodious strain,
 Till my rapt soul high on the swelling note
 To heav'n ascend—far from these horrid fiends!

COMUS.

Mere airy dreams of air-bred people these!
 Who look with envy on more happy man,
 And wou'd decry the joys they cannot taste.
 Quit not the substance for a stalking shade
 Of hollow virtue, which eludes the grasp.
 Drink this, and you will scorn such idle tales.

*[He offers the cup, which she puts by, and
 offers to rise.]*

Nay, lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,
 Your nerves are all bound up in alabaster,
 And you a statue, or, as *Daphne* was,
 Root-bound, that fled *Apollo*.

LADY.

LADY.

Fool, do not boast;
 Thou can'st not touch the freedom of my mind
 With all thy charms, altho' this corp'ral rind
 Thou hast immannac'd, while heav'n sees good.

COMUS.

Why are you vex'd, lady? why do you frown?
 Here dwell no frowns nor anger; from these gates
 Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
 That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
 When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
 Brisk as the *April*-buds in primrose season.
 And first behold this cordial julep here,
 That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
 With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mix'd.
 Not that *Nepenthes*, which the wife of *Thone*
 In *Ægypt* gave to *Jove*-born *Helena*,
 Is of such pow'r to stir up joy, as this,
 To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

LADY.

Know, base deluder, that I will not taste it.
 Keep thy detested gifts for such as these.

[Points to his crew.]

COMUS.

Why shou'd you be so cruel to yourself,
 And to those dainty limbs, which nature lent
 For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
 But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
 And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
 With that which you receiv'd on other terms,
 Scorning the unexempt condition,
 By which all human frailty must subsist,
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain;
 That have been tir'd all day without repast,
 And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
 This will restore all soon.

LADY.

LADY.

'Twill not, false traitor!

'Twill not restore the truth and honesty,
 That thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
 Was this the cottage, and the safe abode
 Thou told'st me of? Hence with thy brew'd enchantments.
 Hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence
 With vizard'd falshood, and base forgery?
 And woud'st thou seek again to trap me here
 With lick'rish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
 Were it a draught for *Juno* when she banquets,
 I wou'd not taste thy treas'nous offer—None
 But such as are good men can give good things;
 And that which is not good, is not delicious
 'To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

COMUS.

O, foolishness of men! that lend their ear
 To those budge doctors of the *Stoick* fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the *Cynick* tub,
 Praising the lean and fallow abstinence.
 Wherefore did nature pour her bounties forth
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Cov'ring the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
 Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
 But all to please and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms,
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk,
 To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
 Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
 She hutch'd th'all worship'd ore, and precious gems
 To store her children with. If all the world
 Should in a pet of temp'rance feed on pulse,
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frize,
 Th'All-giver would be unthank'd, wou'd be unprais'd,
 Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
 And we should serve him as a grudging master,

G

As

As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
 And live like nature's bastards, not her sons ;
 Who wou'd be quite furcharg'd with her own weight,
 And strangled with her waste fertility.

LADY.

I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
 In this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
 Wou'd think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules, prank'd in reason's garb.
 I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
 And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
 Impostor, do not charge most innocent nature,
 As if she would her children shou'd be riotous
 With her abundance. She, good caterefs,
 Means her provision only to the good,
 That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare temperance.
 If ev'ry just man, that now pines with want,
 Had but a mod'rate and befitting share
 Of that which lewdly-pamper'd luxury
 Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
 Nature's full blessings wou'd be well dispens'd
 In unsuperfluous even proportion ;
 And she no whit encumber'd with her store.
 And then the giver wou'd be better thank'd,
 His praise due paid: For swinish gluttony
 Ne'er looks to heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
 But with besotted base ingratitude
 Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. Shall I go on?
 Or have I said enough?

COMUS.

Enough to shew

That you are cheated by the lying boasts
 Of starving pedants, that affect a fame
 From scorning pleasures which they cannot reach.

EUPHROSYNE

EUPHROSYNE *sings.*

1.

*Preach not me your musty rules,
Ye drones, that mould in idle cell;
The heart is wiser than the schools,
The senses always reason well.*

2.

*If short my span, I less can spare
To pass a single pleasure by;
An hour is long, if lost in care,
They only live, who life enjoy.*

COMUS.

*These are the maxims of the truly wise,
Of such as practise what they preach to others.
Here are no hypocrites, no grave dissemblers;
Nor pining grief, nor eating cares approach us,
Nor sighs, nor murmurs—but of gentle Love,
Whose woes delight. What must his pleasures then?*

EUPHROSYNE *sings.*

*Ye Fauns, and ye Dryads, from hill, dale, and grove,
Trip, trip it along, conducted by Love;
Swiftly resort to COMUS' gay court,
And in various measures shew Love's various sport.*

G 2

Enter

Enter the Fauns and Dryads, and attend to the following directions. The tune is play'd a second time, to which they dance.

*Now lighter and gayer, ye tinkling strings, sound;
Light, light in the air, ye nimble nymphs, bound.
Now, now with quick feet the ground beat, beat, beat,
Now, now with quick feet the ground beat, beat, beat, &c.*

*Now cold and denying,
Now kind and complying,
Consenting, repenting,
Disdaining, complaining,
Indifference now feigning.*

Again with quick feet the ground beat, beat, beat.

[*Exeunt dancers.*

COMUS.

Lift, lady, be not coy, and be not cozen'd
With that same vaunted name *Virginity*.
Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unfavoury in th' enjoyment of itself:
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
It withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
Beauty is nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home,
They had their name from thence. Coarse complexions,
And cheeks of sorry grain, will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the housewife's wool.
What need a vermil-tinctur'd lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?

There

There was another meaning in these gifts ;
 Think what, and be advis'd ; you are but young yet,
 This will inform you soon.

LADY.

To him that dares

Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words,
 Against the sun-clad power of chastity,
 Fain wou'd I something say, yet to what purpose ?
 Thou hast not ear, nor soul to apprehend ;
 And thou art worthy that thou should'st not know
 More happiness than this thy present lot ;
 Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetorick,
 That has so well been taught her dazling fence.
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd ;
 Yet shou'd I try, the uncontrouled worth
 Of this pure cause wou'd kindle my rapt spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence,
 That dumb things wou'd be mov'd to sympathize,
 And the brute earth wou'd lend her nerves and shake,
 Till all thy magick structures, rear'd so high,
 Were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

COMUS.

She fables not, I feel that I do fear
 Her words set off by some superior power ;
 And tho' not mortal, yet a cold shudd'ring dew
 Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of *Jove*
 Speaks thunder and the chains of *Erebus*
 To some of *Saturn's* crew. I must dissemble,
 And try her yet more strongly—Come, no more,
 This is meer moral babble, and direct
 Against the canon laws of our foundation ;
 I must not suffer this, yet 'tis but the lees
 And settlings of a melancholy blood ;
 But this will cure all freight, one sip of this
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The

*The brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest the glass
out of his hand, and break it against the ground ;
his rout make sign of resistance, but are all
driven off.*

Enter the first SPIRIT.

What, have you let the false enchanter scape?
O! ye mistook, you shou'd have snatch'd his wand,
And bound him fast; without his rod revers'd,
And backward mutters of dislevering power,
We cannot free the lady, that sits here
In stony fetters fix'd, and motionless:
Yet stay, be not disturb'd; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have, which may be us'd,
Which once of *Melibæus* old I learn'd,
The soothing shepherd that e'er pip'd on plains.
I learn'd 'em then when with my fellow swain,
The youthful *Lycidas*, his flocks I fed.

There is a gentle nymph, not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth *Severn* stream,
Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure:
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invok'd in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself:
And see, the swain himself in season comes.

Enter the second and third SPIRIT.

Haste, *Lycidas*, and try the tuneful strain,
Which from her bed the fair *Sabrina* calls.

SONG.

SONG. *By the third SPIRIT.*

SABRINA fair,
 Listen where thou art, sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lillies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
 Listen for dear honour's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.

SABRINA rises attended by water-nymphs.

SONG.

SABRINA.

By the rushy-fring'd bank,
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick-set with agat, and the azure sheen
 Of Turkish blue, and em'rald green,
 That in the channel strays;
 Whilst from off the waters fleet
 Thus I set my printless feet

O'er

COMUS.

O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread;
Gentle swain, at thy request,
I am here.

RECITATIVO.

Third SPIRIT.

Goddeſs dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmed band
Of true virgin here diſtreſs'd,
Thro' the force and thro' the wile,
Of unbleſs'd enchanter vile.

RECITATIVO.

SABRINA.

Shepherd, 'tis my office beſt
To help enſnared chaſtity:
Brighteſt lady, look on me;
Thus I ſprinkle on thy breaſt
Drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy ruby'd lip;

Next

*Next this marble venom'd seat,
 Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold :
 Now the spell hath lost his bold,
 And I must haste, e're morning-hour,
 To wait in Amphitrite's bower.*

*SABRINA descends, and the lady rises out of her seat ;
 the brothers embrace her tenderly.*

Eldest BROTHER.

I oft had heard, but ne'er believ'd till now,
 There are, who can by potent magick spells
 Bend to their crooked purpose nature's laws,
 Blot the fair moon from her resplendent orb,
 Bid whirling planets stop their destin'd course,
 And thro' the yawning earth from *Stygian* gloom
 Call up the meagre ghost to walks of light :
 It may be so,—for some mysterious end !
 Yet still the freedom of the mind, you see,
 No spell can reach ; that righteous *Jove* forbids,
 Lest man should call his frail divinity
 The slave of evil, or the sport of chance.

Youngest BROTHER.

Why did I doubt ? Why tempt the wrath of heaven
 To shed just vengeance on my weak distrust ?
 Here spotless innocence has found relief,
 By means as wond'rous as her strange distress.
 Inform us, *Thyrsis*, if for this thine aid
 We aught can pay, that equals thy desert ?

First SPIRIT.

Pay it to heaven, that lent you grace
 To escape this cursed place ;

To heaven, that here has try'd your youth,
 Your faith, your patience, and your truth,
 And sent you thro' these hard essays
 With a crown of deathless praise,
 To triumph in victorious dance
 O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

Then the two first SPIRITS advance and speak alternately the following lines, which MILTON calls Epiloguizing.

To the ocean now I fly,
 And those happy climes that lye
 Where day never shuts his eye,
 Up in the broad fields of the sky:
 There I suck the liquid air,
 All amidst the gardens fair
 Of *Hesperus*, and his daughters three,
 That sing about the golden tree.

Along the crisped shades and bowers
 Revels the spruce and jocund spring;
 The graces and the rosy-bosom'd hours
 Thither all their bounties bring;
 There eternal summer dwells,
 And west-winds with musky wing
 About the cedar'n alleys fling
Nard and *Cassia's* balmy smells.

Now my task is smoothly done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,
 Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend;
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners of the moon.

Mortals,

Mortals, that would follow me,
Love *Virtue*, she alone is free :
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or, if *Virtue* feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

C H O R U S.

*Taught by Virtue, you may climb
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.*

F I N I S.



Monks that would follow me,
 Love Nature, she alone is free:
 She can teach you how to climb
 Higher than the spirey chimneys;
 Or, if Nature's fables were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

CHORUS

Teach by Nature, you may climb
 Higher than the spirey chimneys;
 Or, if Nature's fables were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

F I N I S.



